

**Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER)  
Steering Team Meeting  
November 10, 2016**

[http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette\\_Coordination/](http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/FPOM/2010/Willamette_Coordination/)

**Facilitator’s Summary**

<i><b>Action</b></i>	<i><b>By Whom?</b></i>	<i><b>By When?</b></i>
Send Doodle poll to schedule call to discuss Managers’ Forum agenda and December meeting	DSC	ASAP
Provide suggested edits for the 10/14 meeting summary to Emily.	Steering Team	COB, Monday, November 14 <sup>th</sup>
Provide suggested edits on the MF Sub-basin RM&E Plan to Rich and Stephanie via “tracked changes”.	Steering team	November 16 <sup>th</sup>
Incorporate edits and provide revised draft of MF Sub-basin Plan to Steering Team for review.	Rich & Stephanie	November 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Continue discussing Issues 2 & 3 to seek resolution.	Steering Team	December meeting

***In the room:*** Chris Allen (FWS), Leslie Bach (NPCC), Stephanie Burchfield (NMFS), Ian Chane (USACE), Brad Eppard (USACE), Bernadette Graham-Hudson (ODFW), Marc Liverman (NMFS), Rich Piaskowski (USACE), Dan Spear (BPA), Riccardo Walker (USACE), Karl Weist (NPCC);

***Participants on the Phone:*** Alyssa Mucken (OWRD), Lawrence Schwabe (Grand Ronde), Jason Sweet (BPA);

***Facilitation Team:*** Donna Silverberg & Emily Stranz, DS Consulting

**Welcome, introductions, & follow-up**

Emily Stranz, DS Consulting, started the meeting, noting that the purpose of the day’s session is to discuss and reach consensus on process and outcomes for efforts related to the Willamette system.

She asked if there were any suggested edits on the October 14<sup>th</sup> meeting summary; group members did not provide any edits, however, requested more time for review.

- **ACTION:** Steering Team members will provide any suggested edits to the October 12th meeting summary to Emily by the close of business Monday, November 14, 2016. If no additional edits are provided the summary will be considered final.

The group checked in on the status of action items from the October meeting. All of the actions were completed, with the exception of convening USACE, NMFS, and NPCC attorneys to discuss NPCC membership in the WATER process. Marc Liverman, NMFS, noted that this is an ongoing conversation and may be discussed at the December Managers’ Forum meeting.

**Update on progress from G4 RPA/COP clarification discussions**

Marc also reported on the November 4<sup>th</sup> G4 meeting, which included Ian Chane representing the Corps, Eric Hein representing USFWS, Jason Sweet representing BPA, and Marc representing NMFS. Marc shared that as suggested at the October Steering Team meeting, the G4 met to start developing an alignment document that aims to clearly articulate the RPA and COP measures, assumptions/rationale, status of implementation, and due dates. The group also flagged RPA measures that require management

direction in the near future. Marc reflected that the discussion was a good start, but there is more work needed. The G4 plans to continue working through this exercise and will keep the Steering Team apprised to their progress.

It was clarified that the COP was intended to address aspects of the Big-Four that were not specifically detailed in the RPA. Thus, the COP does not and was not intended to address all of the RPA – the RPA and COP are not analogous documents. **RPA measures that are not in the COP still need to be implemented to fulfill the terms of the BiOp.** The group coalesced around this clarification and there were no objections voiced.

**Report back & next steps on ST/RM&E conversations re: elevated issues**

Emily asked the Steering Team to report back on their conversations with RM&E staff regarding the three issues elevated to the Steering Team for resolution. Specifically, she asked for any additional questions that came up that still need to be addressed from the Steering Team’s perspective in order to help frame up next steps.

**The group discussed Issue #1: ongoing analysis and reporting of paired-release returning adults.** In October, the RM&E Team asked the Steering Team to decide whether the paired release data should be analyzed in 2017 or if they should wait to analyze in a year when more data is available. The Steering Team posed the following questions:

- What is the criticality of the information?
- What is the utility of the information?
- How is this information used?
- Where has it added value in the past?

The Steering Team discussed the issue using the “three-legged stool” framework that was utilized in the COP:

Cost Efficiency	Biological Benefit	Technical Feasibility
The cost of the study is not a barrier to implementing (from the Corps’ point of view).	In the past, the study reports have provided unexpected “lessons learned” that were used to inform fish management decisions, i.e. reservoir rearing patterns.	The juvenile study does not yield robust data; the “n” is low and the data is of a coarse grade.
It may be more efficient to manage the data annually instead of later processing multiple years of data at once.	This data helps address biological uncertainties and combined with other datasets helps to inform researchers and management.	The juvenile study methodology has been surpassed at this point by other study methodologies.
Fish management agencies do not have the staff capacity to process the dataset internally.	It adds to overall body of knowledge and informs the lifecycle model.	The data is preliminary and may not be appropriate to use to form conclusions or make decisions with at this point.
	It can help inform other research/researchers.	
	The adult return data is what is needed now to inform	

management decisions.

The group caucused to allow the action agencies and fish managers to discuss how to move forward. After caucusing, the action agencies shared that they are willing to consider funding this study in FY17, if the fish managers provide more information on the purpose and need for the data moving forward.

From the action agencies' point of view, they are policy constrained and any study must relate to an action that is tied to an asset. There is a lot of scrutiny to make sure that the funding is appropriately aligned. The AA's see this project as a commitment in the past that informed a decision, however, now needs to be revisited to ensure it is still informing a research need. They see this process as scientifically iterative and as they learn, the information needs will adapt and shift. **The AA's made it clear that from their point of view synthesizing this information is not informing management decisions and is not providing necessary information in FY17.**

From the fish manager's point of view, while the information does not necessarily inform specific decisions now, in the past this data has brought to light information that was unexpected and helpful for management. The information helps to fill in life history data gaps, continues building the basins' knowledge database, and addresses uncertainty research. More specifically, the juvenile and adult migration timing informs the life history model, providing information specific to the implementation and management of the Willamette BiOp. **The Fish Managers made it clear that from their point of view this data is helpful in addressing uncertainties and informing management.**

→ **ACTION:** The Corps will consider the information that the fish managers provided regarding the need for the information and will provide a decision in writing to the Steering Team. When the data is analyzed, the Corps will make sure to provide it to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

**Issue #2 and #3 were tabled until the December meeting.** It was noted that the screw trapping study noted in Issue #2 needs to be addressed ASAP if it is to be funded by the time fish are out migrating.

→ **ACTION:** The Steering Team will discuss Issues 2 and 3 at the December meeting, prioritizing the screw trapping study that is part of Issue 2.

**Issue #4: rearing and migration pattern study with juvenile winter steelhead in the North Santiam River above Detroit Dam.** The Steering Team and RM&E Team members present discussed this issue from both a process and content perspective. In regards to process, there was significant frustration in the vetting and decision making that took place in and after the RM&E Team meeting on November 3rd. Both NMFS and ODFW representatives present noted that it was a surprise to them that the Corps did not think the study was of value any more, as the concept was ranked highly across the agencies and by the Grand Ronde tribe. They also shared that it felt disrespectful that the Corps asked for their input and then decided not to fund the study before the due date for input. The Corps clarified that they did not decide, instead, they intended to suggest an alternative study for consideration. Rich apologized for the way the RM&E meeting went and said that it was not the way that the Corps wants to work with the region. He continued that this is an iterative process and that it is necessary to be able to respond to new information and changing conditions.

It was noted that in previous years, the Corps advocated for using F1 steelhead for studies to provide information to help design passage at Detroit. However, Ian shared that at this point, this proposal does not help move things forward because the Corps is uncertain if NMFS has decided that winter steelhead will be reintroduced above Detroit. Stephanie explained that this study will provide data to feed into the

reintroduction plan and that NMFS does not want to put wild fish above the dams until there is downstream passage and the disease concerns have been addressed.

Bernadette shared that ODFW feels that the proposed study provides information on biological benefits and life history and would like to see the study move forward.

The group discussed the merits of the study. There was discussion around using hatchery surrogates as representatives of wild populations. Hatchery surrogates have been used in studies throughout the basin, however, not for residualization studies. It was noted that these are F1 fish and are the closest to wild fish that they will be able to get.

Various study options were discussed, including paring down the study to release in only one tributary, releasing PIT tagged fish below the dam, tagging and releasing the fish at Willamette Falls, and not tagging the fish, but releasing them below Detroit. Stephanie noted that she provided multiple options in her email, however, none were deemed feasible by the Corps. At this point, the fish will likely be released downstream of Detroit, untagged.

Donna acknowledged that for everyone in the room this is an unfortunate situation. It was noted that there is still work to do on improving the RM&E prioritization process, despite the progress that has been made so far this year. In addition, this situation points to the importance of the work underway in clarifying management direction around the RPA, as well as the need for sub-basin RM&E plans. Donna encouraged the group to think creatively about potential opportunities to utilize the fish and get back to the Corps with any ideas as soon as possible. The “drop dead” date for moving the fish from OSU was believed to be December 12<sup>th</sup> and it would take time to move any proposal through the Corps.

#### **Joint discussion with RM&E Team re: the Middle Fork RM&E Plan**

The group reviewed and discussed the draft Middle Fork Sub-basin RM&E Plan that Rich and Stephanie jointly drafted. Ian started by thanking the two for their work, noting that the draft looks very good. Rich explained that the plan intends to lay out a framework for management to look at and respond to the question of passage feasibility in the Middle Fork. Once/if passage has been determined to be feasible, a Project Design Team (PDT) would be established to assess and further design passage. This plan informs the first step of determining what RM&E is needed to assess the feasibility of passage.

Donna asked the Steering Team if in their review they noticed any fatal flaws. No fatal flaws were identified; however, Steering Team members provided suggestions and comments:

- Reorganize the questions so that the questions regarding juveniles are located in the juvenile section, questions regarding adults are in the adults section, etc.
- Include a diagram or flowchart to help clarify what decisions get made in 2019 and 2021. Clarify at which point the decision on passage and the PDT is made (when do the questions change from if to what?).
- Rewrite questions to frame them up in a more positive light, some of the questions sound like they are trying to prove passage is not feasible.
  - Fix the typo on page 7 (replace the word “survival” with “mortality”).
- Make sure that the questions address all of the limitations that the ISAB pointed out with the life cycle model.
  - This plan predominately addresses pre-spawn mortality and juvenile survival, however, needs to incorporate the other noted limitations.
- Identify what additions to the life cycle model you are trying to address on pages 4-5.
  - Consider conducting a peer review with the NOAA Science Center, ISRB, or modelers.

- Include a decision tree if sending it to the ISAB for review.
- Incorporate visual information on the three main limiting factors and how they are addressed.
- Add a cover page pointing out the areas where there are still questions, where the team is still working, etc.

The group noted that there is still more to discuss regarding the Middle Fork plan and areas where the agencies may diverge. Stephanie noted that from the NMFS perspective, the question is how passage will be implemented, not if passage is feasible. Ian responded that the Corps cannot commit to passage in the Middle Fork until Cougar passage is implemented. The Corps needs to “prove-up” that passage can feasibly be done. At that point, they can go back to Congress and ask for funding. He also noted that the Corps would like more discussion on Fall Creek in the future.

Bernadette shared that ODFW is not comfortable holding off some of the studies until 2019 and would like to see them implemented sooner. She also suggested adding research on water quality and pathogen concerns for water coming out of the reservoirs, as it may be contributing to pre-spawn mortality.

- **ACTION:** Steering Team members will provide suggested edits to Rich and Stephanie via “tracked changes” by November 16th. Rich and Stephanie will incorporate edits and provide another draft to the Steering Team before the Thanksgiving holiday.

**The Steering Team agreed that the entire plan should be provided to the Managers ahead of the December Managers’ Forum meeting.** It was noted that the Managers need to know that this is a draft, as well as, next steps. Additionally, the Steering Team felt that they should highlight any areas that the group is still working on and signal to the managers that the region is successfully collaborating on the development of the plan.

**Preparation for the 12/1 Managers’ Forum session**

Donna shared that she met with Kevin Brice, USACE, to discuss the draft Managers’ Forum agenda which was derived from the Steering Team’s discussion at the October meeting. Donna asked for Steering Team input on the agenda, specifically, if there is anything that they need to hear from the Managers. It was suggested that the Managers’ need to be clear with the WATER teams regarding their expectations around collaboration – do the manager’s support the collaborative effort? Also, clarity is needed around the governing authority of WATER participants, including NPCC and the State of Oregon. In regards to the WATER Guidelines, Donna suggested that if the Steering Team has questions that they need answered by the Managers, they will need to frame up high-level questions, as the conversation with the Managers will not be an editing exercise.

- **ACTION:** The Steering Team will schedule a call to continue discussion on the Managers’ Forum agenda. DS Consulting will help schedule the call

**GAANT Chart**

Ian provided the Steering Team a GAANT chart illustrating the engineering review timeline. He noted that he is currently working with the engineers to see if the timeline for review can be shifted at all to alleviate the heavy load in December and January. **The group will revisit this at the December Steering Team meeting.**

**Next Steps**

Donna suggested that in order to help the WATER Teams pave the way for constructive collaborative process they should actively practice the following:

- The “no surprises rule”. Share information frequently and early in order to prevent catching each other off guard and causing undue stress and dysfunction.
- Listen to each other; hold back from jumping in before others are done speaking.
- Seek understanding, check assumptions, and put assumptions aside. Ask your colleagues “Am I hearing you say....?”
- Stop assigning bad motives and start looking for opportunities to strengthen relationships.

She shared that in one-on-one conversations with individual team members it has become clear that no one is trying to sustain the distrust and conflict, however, it is enduring. This means that to build trust and move forward collectively it is going to take conscious effort from everyone.

In regards to the issue resolution, the Corps will provide a decision in writing on Issue #1. The Steering Team will continue discussions on the remaining issues at the December meeting. Steering Team members will provide suggested edits on the Middle Fork Sub-basin RM&E Plan to Rich and Stephanie, who will then provide another draft for a final round of review. The Steering Team will hold a call to discuss the Managers’ Forum agenda in greater detail.

The next Steering Team meeting is scheduled for December 8<sup>th</sup>; however, the Willamette Within Our Reach conference is planned for the same day and WATER members are encouraged to attend. **DS Consulting will send a Doodle poll to determine the time and date of the next meeting.** Donna thanked the group for their good work, and with that the meeting was adjourned.

*This summary is respectfully submitted by DS Consulting. Suggested edits are welcome and can be sent to Emily at [emily@dsconsult.co](mailto:emily@dsconsult.co).*